

California State Senate

STATE CAPITOL
ROOM 2080
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
TEL (916) 651-4022
FAX (916) 651-4922

SENATOR
ED HERNANDEZ, O.D.

TWENTY-SECOND SENATE DISTRICT

100 S. VINCENT AVENUE
SUITE 401
WEST COVINA, CA 91790
TEL (626) 430-2499
FAX (626) 430-2494



Immediate Release
May 7, 2015

Contact: Janet Chin
(626)430-2499

Senator Hernandez Advances Bill Giving Nurse Practitioners Full Practice Authority *Legislation Will Help Address Shortage of Health Care Providers*

(Sacramento, CA)— Legislation authored by Senator Dr. Ed Hernandez, O.D. (D – West Covina), Chair of the Senate Health Committee, which would give Nurse Practitioners full practice authority was passed by the California Senate today. Senator Hernandez emphasized the need for more providers, and how we can use our existing workforce of nurse practitioners more effectively to bridge the gap.

“We are working hard at the state level to ensure every Californian has access to affordable, quality health coverage, but what good is an insurance card if you can’t get into see a health care provider when you need one?” said Hernandez, “We need to make better use of the trained healthcare workforce we already have if we are ever going to meet demand, and nurse practitioners are some of the best trained people in that workforce.”

California is home to the largest number of primary care physicians and nurse practitioners in the country. However, the state ranks 23rd in the number of primary care physicians per resident. Just 16 out of California’s 58 counties have the recommended ratio of physicians to residents. Additionally, 1 in 3 residents receives care from the Medi-Cal system where wait times to see a doctor can be as long as 9 months.

Nurse practitioners are advanced practice registered nurses who have pursued higher education, a master’s or Doctorate degree, and certification as a nurse practitioner. They play an important role in the health care delivery system and provide care in a variety of settings such as hospitals, community clinics, and private practice settings, including many medically underserved communities throughout the state. SB 323 will give full practice authority to nurse practitioners who are nationally certified, carry liability insurance, and are practicing in a licensed medical facility, clinic, or group practice.

“Nurse practitioners are highly-skilled medical professionals who are well-positioned to quickly step up and serve some of the neediest communities in our state” continued Hernandez “and We have 30 years of evidence in the 20 states that already allow full practice authority that all says the same thing: when people are treated by nurse practitioners patient outcomes are equal to their physician counterparts and patient satisfaction is generally better.”

SB 323 passed out of the Senate by a vote of 25 to 5, and now moves to the Assembly for consideration. Senator Hernandez is optimistic about the bill’s chances moving forward.

“As a legislator, and as a health care provider, I have to be concerned with ensuring people have access to adequate care when they need it” added Hernandez, “SB 323 makes it possible for nurse practitioners to work collaboratively with physicians in a team-based approach so that patients get the right level of care at the right time. I was glad to see that a vast, bipartisan majority of my colleagues agreed with me today and I am looking forward to continuing this discussion in the Assembly.”

###